

# JOURNAL OF FREEDOM.

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RALEIGH, N. C.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 14, 1865.

Inauguration of Douglass Institute.

LECTURE OF FREDERICK DOUGLASS.

ADVICE TO COLORED PEOPLE.

[From the Baltimore American, Sept. 30th.]

Early last spring an association was formed composed of thirty or forty colored men of Baltimore, who purchased the building on Lexington street, near Davis, formerly occupied as the Newton University, for the sum of \$16,000, and organized the "Douglass Institute," the object of which is the intellectual advancement of the colored portion of the community. Last week, the Institute building was formally opened for the purpose indicated above by the delivery of a lecture of Frederick Douglass, whose reputation as an orator is well known. An audience of seven or eight hundred males and females, among them a number of white persons, was seated in the main saloon of the building, which was appropriately decorated on the occasion. Immediately over the stand whereon the lecturer and the officers of the Institute were seated was a full-length portrait of the late lamented President Lincoln, while on either side was placed the National flag. After prayer by Bishop Wayman, of the African M. E. Church, Mr. Douglass was introduced and delivered the following address:

I have, during my public career, had the honor to address many assemblies both at home and abroad, and in furtherance of various objects; but I do not remember ever to have appeared anywhere under a deeper sense of importance of the occasion than I feel to-night. I know it is common to call all occasions, upon which we assemble in large numbers, great and important, and in some sense the characterization is just and proper; for the movement of large bodies of men in this or that direction, for any purpose, good or ill, are always important and worthy of note. But the present occasion is one of no ordinary character. We come here to dedicate an institution which, in my opinion, is destined to play an important part in promoting the freedom and elevation of the colored people of this city and State, and I may say of the whole Union.

Let me at the outset put myself at ease by expressing to the founders of this Institution my sincere and heartfelt thanks for assigning to me the high place I occupy on this occasion, and above all for associating my name with the Institute here established. It is an honor. I look upon this proceeding on your part not merely as a compliment to me personally, but as an open avowal of the great principles of progress, liberty, justice and equality, which I have for years endeavored to advocate. When I left Maryland twenty-seven years ago, I did so with the firm resolve never to forget my brothers and sisters in bondage, and to do whatever might be in my power to accomplish their emancipation; and I have to say to-night that in whatever else I may have failed, in this at least I have not failed. No man can truthfully say I ever deserted the post of duty.

The establishment of an Institute bearing my name by the colored people in the city of my boyhood so soon after the act of emancipation in this State looms before me as a first grand indication of progress. I say it is a first, and first indications, whether observed in the silent and mysterious phenomena of physical nature, or in the moral and intellectual developments of humane society, are always interesting to thoughtful men. Every age has its prophets and its Messiahs. We are ever waiting and watching like good old Simeon for our babe of Bethlehem. John Brown used to say he had looked over our people as over a dark sea, in hope of seeing a head rise up with a mind to plan and a hand to deliver. Any movement of the water arrested his attention. In all directions we desire to catch the first sign. The first sign of clear weather on the ocean after a season of darkness and storm; the first sign of returning health after long and dreary months of wasting fever; the first sign of rain after a famine, threatening drought; the first indication of spring, silently releasing the knotty and congealed earth from the frosty fetters of winter; the first sign of peace after the ten thousand calamities, horrors, desolation and alarms of war, ever more bring joy and gladness to the human heart.

The mind of man has a special attraction towards first objects. It delights in the dim and shadowy outlines of the coming fact. There is a calm and quiet satisfaction in the contemplation of present attainments—but the great future and the yet unattained—awaken in the soul the deepest springs of poetry and enthusiasm.

The occasion that brings us here this evening may be properly viewed in the spirit of these brief reflections. It is an indication of the rise of a people long oppressed, enslaved and bound in the chains

of ignorance, to a freer and higher plane of life, manhood, usefulness and civilization.

Peace, says the noble Sumner, has its triumph not less than war. I avail myself of the aphorism, and claim the dedication of the Douglass Institute in this, the city of Baltimore, in the State of Maryland, dedicated as it will be to knowledge, virtue and liberty—as one such triumph. I think it quite difficult to over estimate the importance and significance of this first effort of the kind in the city of Baltimore. I confess, that the proposition to establish such an institution here and now—was a source of apprehension as well as joy—joy in the thought of its success, apprehensive lest the effort should fail. It seemed too much to expect.

A people hitherto pronounced by American learning as incapable of anything higher than the dull round of merely animal life—held to be originally and permanently inferior—fit only for the conser and heavier labors of human society, shut out for ages from the arts, from science, and from all the more elevating forms of industry—deprived of the social incentives to excellence, which everywhere act upon other men, dare here and now to establish an Institute, devoted to all the higher wants and aspirations of the human soul. It is a great fact.

Your very enemies looking upon this event will admit that it speaks well for the colored people of Baltimore. It is in itself a powerful appeal from the popular judgment under which the colored people of this city and of this State, and of the whole country, have staggered during more than two hundred years. I would bestow no extravagant and indiscriminate praise upon the founders of the Douglass Institute. You are sensible men and would not thank me if I did. The colored people of this country have as much reason to deprecate flattery as they have to disparagement. What they want is the simple truth, and this renders honor where honor is due. I say to you, gentlemen, what you all know, that this institution, viewed in comparison with those established by our white fellow-citizens for similar objects, stands but as a dwarf to a giant; but regarded in the light of our history, in view of our numbers and opportunities, the Douglass Institute is the equal to any in credit, and far more significant than most of them. It is a beginning, and though like all beginnings it is small, it is, nevertheless, a prophecy of larger and better things. It represents something, and important as it is for itself, it is ten-fold more important for what it represents in the character of its founders. It implies something. It implies that the colored people of Baltimore not only have the higher qualities attributed to the white race, but they are awakening to a healthy consciousness of those qualities in themselves, and that they are beginning to see, as the dark cloud of slavery rolls away, the necessity of bringing those qualities into vigorous exercise. It implies an increased knowledge of the requirements of a high civilization, and a determination to comply with them. This Institute, in character and design, in some measure represents the abilities and possibilities of our race.

My friends, the present is a critical moment for the colored people of this country: our fate for weal or for woe, it may be yet for many generations, trembles now in the balance. No man can tell which way the scale will turn. There is not a breeze that sweeps to us from the South, but comes laden with the wail of our suffering people. Heaven only knows what may yet be in store for our people in the South. But dismal as is the hour, troubled and convulsed as are the times, we may congratulate ourselves upon the establishment of this institution. It comes as a timely argument on the right side of the momentous questions which now agitate the nation. It comes at a time when the American people are once more being urged to do from necessity what they should have done from a sense of right, and of sound statesmanship. It is the same old posture of affairs, wherein our rulers do wrong from choice and right from necessity. They gave us the bullet to save themselves. My hope of the future is now founded just where it was during all the war. I always said that I had much faith in the virtue of the great North, but that I have incomparably more in the villainy of the South. The South is now on its good behavior we are told. They have been invested with powers, merely to see how they will use them. If they do certain things we are told, it will be well, but if they do certain other things—well, somebody will interfere. Very well, I expect to see the rebels consistent with their whole past. They are sworn now as at the beginning of the war and with like results. They take the oath to support a Government they hate. They are sure to abuse the power given them, and I believe there will be virtue enough in the country when it shall see that the loyal whites can only be saved by giving the ballot to the negro, the thing now called impossible, will be done.

The Institute comes up to our help. It comes at a time when hesitation to extend suffrage to the colored people finds its best apology in our alleged incapacity. I deem it fortunate at such a time as this, in such a city as this, so near the Capital of the Nation as this, there has arisen here an Institution in which and by which we

can meet unfavorable doubt with favorable demonstration; in which and by which we can confront ignorance and prejudice with the light and power of positive knowledge, and array against brazen falsehood the rightful influence of accomplished facts.

The very existence of this institution, established and sustained by colored men in this city, so recently a slaveholding city—in this State, so recently a slaveholding State—in this community, among whom freedom of speech was scarcely known by even the white citizens only a few months ago—is a most striking, cheering and instructive fact. It attests the progressive spirit, the sagacity, the courage, the faith, the intelligence and manly ambition of the colored people of this city and State, and reflects credit upon the colored people of the country generally. Its effects upon those who disparage us will be good, but its effects upon ourselves will, I trust, be far better. While to them it will be a standing contradiction, to us it will be a happy concurrence with all our hopes, with all that is high, noble and desirable.

The colored boy and girl now as they walk your streets will hold themselves in higher estimation and assume a prouder and a more elastic step as they look up to the fine proportions of this ample and elegant building and remember that from foundation to roof, from corner-stone to coping-stone, that in purpose and in value, in spirit and in aspiration, it is all the property of the colored citizens of Baltimore.

The establishment of this Institution may be thought by some a new thing of doubtful expediency. There was a time when I should have thought it so myself. In my enthusiasm, perhaps it was my simplicity, it is not material which, I once flattered myself that the day had happily gone by when it could be necessary for colored people in this country to combine and act together as a separate class, and in any representative character whatever, I would have had them infuse themselves and their works into the all political, intellectual, artistic and mechanical activities and combinations of their white fellow-countrymen. It seemed to me that colored conventions, colored exhibitions, colored associations and institutions of all kinds and descriptions had answered the ends of their existence, and might properly be abandoned; that, in short, they were hindrances rather than helps in achieving a higher and better estimation in the public mind for ourselves as a class.

I may say that I still hold this opinion in a modified degree. The latent contempt and prejudice toward our race, which recent political doctrines with reference to our future in this country have developed, the persistent determination of the present Executive of the Nation, and also the action of a portion of the people to hold and treat us in a degraded relation, not only justifies for the present such associate effort on our part, but make it eminently necessary.

It is the misfortune of our class that it fails to derive due advantage from the achievements of its individual members, but never fails to suffer from the ignorance or crimes of a single individual with whom the class is identified. A Benjamin Franklin could redeem, in the eyes of scientific Europe, the mental mediocrity of our young white Republic, but the genius and learning of a Benjamin Banneker of your own State of Maryland, the wisdom and heroism of Toussaint are not permitted to do the same service for the colored race to which they belong. Wealth, learning and ability make an Irishman an Englishman. The same metamorphosing power converts a negro into a white man in this country. When prejudice cannot deny the black man's ability, it denies his race and claims him as a white man. It affirms that if he is not exactly white he ought to be. If not what he ought to be in this particular, he owes whatever intelligence he possesses to the white race by contact or association. Great actions as shown by Robert Small, the gallant Captain of the Planters, and by William Timmen and other brave colored men, which the war with slavery has tossed to the surface, had not been sufficient to change the general estimate formed of the colored race. The eloquence and learning of Doctor Smith, Professors Vathen, Reason, Garnet, Remond, Martin, Beck, Crummell and many others have done us service; but they leave us yet under a cloud. The public, with the mass of ignorance—notwithstanding that ignorance has been enforced and compelled among our people, hitherto—has sternly denied the representative character of our distinguished men. They are treated as exceptions, individual cases, and the like. They contend that the race, as such, is destitute of the subjective original elemental condition of a high self originating and self sustaining civilization.

Such is the sweeping and damaging judgment pronounced in various high quarters against our race; and such is the current of opinion against which the colored people have to advance if they advance at all. A few years ago we met this unfavorable theory as best we could in three ways. We pointed our assailants and traducers to the ancient civilization of Northern Africa. We traced the entangled threads of history and of civilization back to their sources in Africa. We called attention to the somewhat disagreeable fact—agreeable to us but not so to our Teutonic brethren—that the arts,

appliances and blessings of civilization flourished in the very heart of Ethiopia, at a time when all Europe hounded in the debts of ignorance and barbarism. We dwelt on the grandeur, magnificence and stupendous dimensions of Egyptian architecture and held up the fact now generally admitted that that race was master of mechanical forces of which the present generations of men are ignorant.

We pointed to the nautical skill, commercial enterprise and military prowess of Carthage, and have justly claimed relationship with those great nations of antiquity. We are a dark people—so were they. They stood between us and the Europeans in point of complexion as well as in point of geography. We have contended—and not illogically—that if the fact of color was no barrier to civilization in their case, it cannot be in ours.

Our second answer has been drawn from modern examples. These have not I confess, been very numerous or striking, but enough to demonstrate the presence of highly progressive and civilizing elements in the colored race. We find them in Africa—we find them written down in the interesting travels of Barth, Livingstone and Wilson. We find them in Hayti and we find them in our own country. Our third answer has been the unfavorable influences under which our race has been placed by Christendom during the last three centuries. Where under the whole heavens was there ever a race so blasted and withered, so shorn and bereft of all opportunities for development as ourselves. It would seem that the whole Christian world had combined for the destruction of our race, and had summoned heaven and hell, philosophy and revelation, to assist in the work. Our history has been but a track of blood.

Gaunt and hungry sharks have followed us on slave ships by sea, and the hungrier and greedier slave drivers have followed us during all these years with the bloody slave whip on land. The question forced upon us at every moment of our generations has not been, as with other races of men, how shall we adorn, beautifully, exalt and ennoble life but how shall we retain life itself. The struggle with us was not to do, but to be. Mankind lost our human nature in the idea of our being property, and the whole machinery of society was planned, directed and operated to the making us a stupid, spiritless, ignorant, besotted, brutified and utterly degraded race of men.

Thus far we have derived little advantage from any apologies we have made or from any explanations we have patiently given. Our relationship to the ancient Egyptians has been denied; the progress made by the emancipated people of the West Indies is not believed, and men still insist that the fault of our ignorance is not in slavery, but in ourselves. So stood the question concerning us up to the second year of the fierce and sanguinary rebellion now subsiding. Since then the colored man has come before the country in a new light. He has illustrated the highest qualities of a patriot and a soldier. He has ranged himself on the side of the government and country and maintained both against rebels and traitors on the perilous edge of battle. They are now, many of them, sleeping side by side in bloody graves with the bravest and best of all our loyal white soldiers, and many of those who remain alive are scarred and battered veterans—mere stumps of men—armless, legless, maimed and mutilated ones are met with in the streets of every city. The veriest enemies of our race must now admit that we have at least one element of civilization. It is settled that we have manly courage, that we love our country, and that we will fight for an idea. Both governments—the Rebel as well as the Federal—admitted the energy that slumbered in the black man's arm, and both, at the last, endeavored to render that energy useful. But the charge still remains. Now, what are those elemental and original powers of civilization about which men speak and write so earnestly, and which white men claim for themselves and deny to the negro? I answer that they are simply consciousness of wants and ability to gratify them. Here the whole machinery of civilization, whether moral, intellectual or physical, is set in motion.

Man is distinguished from all other animals, but in nothing is he distinguished more than in this, namely, resistance—active and constant resistance to the forces of physical nature. All other animals submit to the same conditions and limitations from generation to generation. The bear to-day is as he was a thousand years ago. Nature provides him with food, clothing and shelter, and he is neither wiser nor better because of the experience of his bearish ancestors. Not so with man. He learns from the past, improves upon the past, looks back upon the past, and hands down his knowledge of the past to after coming generations of men, that they may carry their achievements to a still higher point. To lack this element of progress is to resemble the lower animals, and to possess it to be man.

The mission of the Institution and that of the colored race are identical. It is to develop manhood, to build up manly character among the colored people of this city and State. It is to teach them the true idea of manly independence and self-respect. It is to be a dispenser of knowledge, a radiator of light. In a word, we dedicate the Institution to vir-

ty, temperance, knowledge, truth, liberty and justice.

In this fair Hall to Truth and Freedom given, Pledged to the right before all earth and heaven— A free arena for the strife of mind, To cast, or seek, or color are confined.

We who have been long debarred the privileges of culture may assemble and have our souls thrilled with heavenly music, lifted to the skies on the wings of poetry and song. Here we can assemble and have our minds enlightened upon the whole circle of social, moral, political and educational duties. Here we can come and learn true politeness and refinement. Here the loftiest and best eloquence which the country has produced, whether of Anglo-Saxon or of African descent, shall flow as a river, enriching, ennobling, strengthening and purifying all who will lave in its waters. Here may come all who have a new and popular truth to unfold and enforce, against which old and respectable bars and bolts are iron gates. Here, from this broad hall, shall go forth an influence which shall at last change the current of public contempt for the oppressed and lift the race into the popular conclusion which justly belongs to their manly character and achievements.

On the conclusion of the address a call was made for Rev. Mr. Lynch, who for a half hour spoke on subjects relating to the future state of the colored people. The audience then retired.

Letters were received and read from Major General W. S. Hancock, commanding this Department, and others, in which they express their regrets at not being able to be present.

**A Backwoods Sermon.**

My Brethren:—My text is some where between the lids of the Bible and reads thus: "Why do you go bowed down as a bulrush?" Now, my dear brethren—ah, I don't suppose many of you understand—ah, what a bulrush means—ah, Well then I'm wiser for to tell you—ah, for it is a most dreadful thing—ah, for men—ah, to go like a bulrush—ah. But to explain my text—ah, Did you never see in the spring of the year—ah, when the hickory buds were coming out—ah, a little bull—ah, go to a clay rock—ah, and stick his horns deep into the clay—ah. And then are you never seen him—ah, go to a bush—ah, and rub his head up and down—ah, going at the same time—ah hum-hum-hum-hum, hum-hum-hum-hum. And all at once—ah, he cocked up his tail—ah, and run off like the devil was after him—ah.

This, my dear brethren—ah, is what is meant by a bulrush—ah. Now, my dear brethren—ah, this is the way with poor sinners—ah, till the devil has got 'em—ah, and by and by—ah they keep a goin' along—ah, till all at once—ah, they cock up their tails—ah, and go right to the devil—ah. Let me say to you then, my dear brethren—ah, not to go bowed down like a bulrush—ah.

Dow, Jr.

General Howard estimates that ten thousand freedmen have learned to read and write since the war.

To reach the colored people of the State, business men would do well to advertise in the *Journal of Freedom*.

**Lady's Own Store,**

**T. R. FENTRESS' OLD STAND,**

**No. 15 Fayetteville Street,**

**RALEIGH, N. C.**

MESSRS. BOWEN & RANDALL, AT THE ABOVE

named place, announce to the public that they have just

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**DRY GOODS,**

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**READY MADE CLOTHING,**

**HATS AND CAPS,**

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**&c., &c., &c., &c., &c.**

including everything that a LADY can wish for, from

TOILET ARTICLES up to a SILK DRESS.

These goods were purchased during the recent fall of

prices in Northern markets and consequently will be sold

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They were selected with special reference to the Fall

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Servants or children sent to the store with orders will

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**SEE FOR YOURSELVES.**

**It Costs Nothing to Look at our**

**Stock.**

**POLITE AND ATTENTIVE CLERKS ARE**

**ALWAYS ON HAND TO WAIT ON**

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**A WEEKLY NEWSPAPER,**

**Published at Raleigh,**

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**EVERY SATURDAY,**

**BROOKS & CRANE.**

Respectfully soliciting advertisements and subscrip-

tions, they promise to spare no pains or labor to make it

a first class journal.

Believing that it is warranted by the Republican spi-

rit which should control our Democratic form of Gov-

ernment, the Journal will advocate the abrogation of

all laws which make any distinction between men on

account of color, and urge the enactment of laws wh-

ich will give every man equal rights. In other words,

it is the intention of the projectors to publish what is

commonly called

**A UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE PAPER**

Expecting to be denounced, socially and politically,

by that class of the community who allow themselves

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except from the Freedmen. On our own responsibility,

and without aid from any of the many associations in

the United States who would be willing to offer it, we

present this prospectus to the world, and with natural

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